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ABSTRACT

In order to build more effective partnerships between home/community and the public school, the Parent Involvement in Education Project (PIEP) conducted a comprehensive six-year study of the various aspects of parent involvement in education from the perspective of key stakeholder groups. This executive summary of the final report represents a synopsis of the Project, highlighting the most basic components and findings of a parent survey conducted in New Orleans, Dallas, San Antonio, and Houston. Areas covered in the executive summary are as follows: introduction; operational definitions; background; method; results; major recommendations (including specific recommendations for administrators, teacher educators, parents, teachers, and principals); and selected references. (DST)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT:

# PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION PROJECT

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November 1985

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## Introduction

Parent involvement in the education of their children both at home and at school is a key aspect of efforts to reform schools as well as increase educational excellence. Parents and educators have equally important roles in the education of learners. To effectively carry out these roles, there needs to be close communication and collaboration between the two groups. In doing so, their concerted efforts will help ensure quality education, effectiveness of schools, and higher academic achievement.

It has become increasingly clear that educators by themselves cannot accomplish the reforms necessary to improve schools and education. There is a need for resources beyond those which educators have traditionally employed. The expanded resources include those that are not only human, but material and financial as well. Although most states have legislated mandates to increase the educational resources base, they still are falling short of what is needed to improve the quality of schooling desired. As a result, educators are having to turn to resources for assistance that they have not fully utilized before.

One of the resources educators are tapping is parents of the children in schools. The appeal to parents is not necessarily a new one but it appears to be a different kind of appeal for help. Historically, parents have been involved in the education of their children. For the most part, this involvement has been of a traditional nature - that which essentially supports school educational efforts or activities. Most parents have limited their involvement to those roles or areas specified by educators. Some have taken the initiative to become more broadly involved, while others, for a variety of reasons, have not been involved at all. As a result, the heightened appeal from educators to parents has produced a mixed response but not at the level educators want or need for improving schools.

The Parent Involvement in Education Project's (PIEP) major goal was to help build more effective partnerships between homes/communities and the public school. During the previous five years, the PIEP conducted a series of surveys to obtain more information about different aspects of parent involvement in education from the perspective of key stakeholder groups. Parents, teachers, principals, teacher educators, school administrators, and state education agency officials are the groups with which the surveys were conducted. The PIEP was interested in not only obtaining viewpoints about parent involvement from these stakeholders but also wanted to examine similarities as well as differences of such feelings among them.

In order to ensure that the survey included a diversity of participants from appropriate stakeholders, this year's survey focused on parents in large size cities of SEDL's six-state region, (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas).

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A population of 500,000 or more per the 1980 Census figures was used to designate a city as large size. The previous parent survey (1982) did not obtain enough of a response from parents in these kinds of cities. The PIEP staff could not speak with as much certainty about parent opinions concerning parent involvement without insights from parents in these locations. Having data from parents in large size cities increases the comprehensiveness of the parent involvement information base and the extent to which it has practical application for various school/community settings.

As part of its major goal to help build more effective partnerships between homes and communities and the public school, PIEP's efforts during the sixth year of the project have focused on three areas. PIEP conducted a survey of parents in large size cities in the region in order to strengthen the information data base, conducted collaborative efforts with other Laboratories and Centers about parent involvement, and disseminated project results about parent involvement in education. This executive summary of the final report discusses highlights of the expanded information base about parent involvement in education.

## Operational Definitions

For clarity, the following operational definitions are provided:

1. Parent Involvement - any of a variety of activities that allow parents to participate in the educational process at home or in school, such as information exchange, decision sharing, volunteer services for schools, home tutoring/teaching, and child advocacy.

2. Preservice Training - preparation of students in teacher training programs, preparation of prospective teachers.

3. Inservice Training - extended preparation of teachers employed in schools.

4. Stakeholders - those persons most likely to be involved in parent involvement efforts (e.g., parents, teachers, principals, school board members, superintendents).

5. Home Tutor Roles - parents helping their own children at home with educational activities or school assignments.

6. Audience Role - parents receiving information about their child's progress or about the school. Parents may be asked to come to the school for special events (e.g., school play, special program, etc.).

7. School Program Supporter Role - parents involved in coming to the school to assist in events; for example, chaperoning a party or field trip, taking tickets at a fund-raising dinner, or such activities.

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8. Co-Learner Role - parents involved in workshops where they and school staff learn about child development or other topics related to education.

9. Paid School staff Role - parents are employed in the school as part of the school's paid staff (e.g., classroom aides, assistant teachers, parent educators, etc.).

10. Advocate Role - parents serve as activists or spokespersons on issues regarding school policies, services for their own child, or community concerns related to the schools.

11. Decision-Maker Role - parents involved as co-equals with school staff in either educational decisions or decisions relating to governance of the school.

12. SEA Officials - persons in state education agencies identified as having program responsibility related to some aspect of parent involvement (e.g., director of federal programs, etc.).

13. LEA Officials - persons in local education agencies identified as having program responsibility for some aspect of parent involvement training (e.g. inservice education directors).

14. IHE Officials - persons in institutions of higher education identified as having program responsibility in some aspect of parent involvement training (e.g., chairperson of elementary education department).

## Background

In response to the increased emphasis on parent involvement in schools, the PIEP has conducted a comprehensive six-year study of the attitudes and current practices of teacher educators, teachers, principals, parents, and school administrators in SEDL's six-state region. A major assumption of this study was that an increase in parent involvement would also increase the job demands on teachers. In addition to their duties related to classroom instruction, this expanded role focusing on parent involvement would require teachers to increase their interaction with parents. In order to determine whether and/or how teacher training should be changed to reflect this larger professional role, the PIEP surveyed each of the aforementioned stakeholder groups. Highlights from these surveys are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Year One: During the first year of the study, 575 professors in colleges of education were asked about their attitudes towards parent involvement and about their current practices in training teachers how to work with parents. The results of this survey indicated that teacher educators favored the general idea of parent involvement and thought teachers should receive training focused on working with parents. However, there was neither a clear consensus about the most appropriate ways for parents to participate in the school, nor about

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the best methods of preparing teachers to work with parents. For the most part, teacher educators were providing little training for teachers in the area of parent involvement.

Year Two: In the second year of the study, survey efforts focused on asking 873 elementary school teachers and 729 elementary school principals about their attitudes towards specific parent involvement activities in their schools. Both teachers and principals were also asked to make recommendations about training teachers to work with parents. The results of this survey indicated that teachers and principals had a favorable attitude toward the value and importance of traditional parent involvement. Conversely, they were generally negative toward parent involvement which involved advocacy and decisionmaking. Also, their descriptions of parent involvement activities revealed that their schools did not sponsor a wide variety of parent involvement activities.

Year Three: The fourth survey in the series focused on the parents themselves. More than 2000 parents were asked questions about attitudes and current practices in parent involvement, similar to the questions used with teachers and principals. Instead of questions about teacher training, parents were asked how schools might improve their parent involvement efforts. The results of this survey indicated that parents had very positive attitudes toward parent involvement and for increasing parent involvement. The responses of parents regarding their own participation in parent involvement activities corresponded closely with the description of current school practices obtained from teachers and principals. The overall responses from parents showed that there was a disparity between parents' high level of interest and the low level of their actual participation.

Year Four: In the next three surveys, school governance persons were asked about their attitudes and current practices regarding parent involvement. Respondents included 1200 school superintendents, 664 school board presidents, and 30 state education agency officials. Respondents were in strong agreement about the importance of parent involvement and listed parent involvement practices similar to the other groups surveyed. As did teachers and principals, administrators did not see the value of parent involvement school advocacy and decisionmaking matters. However, school governance officials also supported teacher training in parent involvement.

Year Five: The fifth year's work focused on reviewing the literature with regard to training teachers in parent involvement, asking experts with experience in parent involvement for their suggestions about training teachers for parent involvement, and developing a set of guidelines and strategies for training teachers in parent involvement. The guidelines and strategies were based on research results from the previous four years and utilized recommendations from the key stakeholder (teacher educators, teachers, principals, parents, and school governance officials) surveys in the region. Project staff also conducted an assessment of the suitability of the

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guidelines and strategies for use by teacher educators/inservice directors in training teachers to involve parents in education. The refined version of the guidelines and strategies was then disseminated to LEA's, IEA's, SEA's, IHE's and others in SEDL's six-state region.

## Method

After identifying the large cities (populations over 500,000), project staff chose four cities as target sites for administering the parent involvement survey. The four cities were those having a disproportionately low response from parent participants in the previous PIEP parent survey. The cities where either very low or no responses were obtained are as follows: Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; and San Antonio, Texas. The PIEP staff worked with state and city PTA officials to make the appropriate local school selections in each city.

The survey's subjects were parents of elementary school-age children in each of the four cities. All parents in each elementary school chosen for the survey were invited to participate in the survey. Parents were asked to take part in the survey during a scheduled PTA meeting held at the selected schools. Typically, many of these parents were members of the PTA. However, information about the survey was sent to all parents and their participation was requested. Approximately 1400 subjects were sought for participation in the survey, or about 350 parents from each city.

The survey instrument is called the Parent Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ). It is the fourth edition of six variations that have been used in previous PIEP surveys. The PIQ is a self-report instrument consisting of 100 closed response items and is divided into seven parts. The PIQ was specifically reviewed and revised for the 1985 survey to assure it contained clear directions, was at a sixth grade reading level, and could be compared with the previous surveys.

## Results

A major Project task for this year was to combine results of parent surveys from large size cities with earlier results from parents in medium and small cities. A total of 1020 completed surveys were returned from the four large size city school districts. These additional surveys made the response from all parent surveys total 3103. Exhibit 1 shows the breakdown of returns for each state and the total return rate of 73.8%. Exhibit 2 describes the sample by city size and Exhibit 3 compares the sample's ethnicity with that of the nation and SEDL's region. The expanded survey improved the return rate and made the sample more representative with regard to both city size and ethnicity.

A composite description of the sample's demographic characteristics shows that 83.6% of those responding were PTA

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Exhibit 1

Number and Percent of Completed Surveys Compared by State

| State | Sample Size | Completed Returns | Percent Returned |
|---|---|---|---|
| AR | 210 | 111 | 52.9 |
| LA | 645 | 491 | 76.1 |
| MS | 285 | 196 | 68.8 |
| NM | 310 | 221 | 71.3 |
| OK | 396 | 153 | 38.7 |
| TX | 2360 | 1931 | 81.8 |
| Total | 4206 | 3103 | 73.8 |

Exhibit 2

Description of Sample by City Size

| Size | Completed Returns | Percent Returned |
|---|---|---|
| Large | 1321 | 42.6 |
| Medium | 680 | 21.9 |
| Small | 1102 | 35.5 |
| Total | 3103 | 100.0 |

Exhibit 3

Ethnicity of Sample Compared to the Nation and Region

| | Nation | Region | Our Sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| White | 73.3 | 61.9 | 59.0 |
| Minority | 26.7 | 38.1 | 41.0 |

Source For National and Regional Data: V.W. Plisko, ed. The Condition of Education, 1984 Edition (Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1984): 18, Table 1.3.

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members, 84.1% were female, 50.1% were between 30 and 39 years of age, 83.5% were married, and 88% had a high school education or more. Blacks represented 22.6% of the respondents whereas Hispanics represented 16.8%. The results also showed that 67.8% of the respondents worked part-time or full-time outside of the home and 91.3% of their spouses worked outside of the home. The survey was evenly distributed among family income levels with 35.6% earning less than $15,000, 26.5% earning between $15,000-$25,000, and 37.9% earning over $25,000.

General Attitudes toward Parent Involvement

In Part I of the survey, parents were asked to respond to 20 statements about parent involvement, using a 4-point rating scale of 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. Overall, there was a strong favorable response toward the value of parent involvement in education.

The statements receiving agreement from the largest percentage of parents were:

| | |
|---|---|
| I want to spend time helping my children get the best education | 99.3% |
| I cooperate with my children's teachers | 98.3% |
| I should make sure that my children do their homework | 97.4% |
| Teachers should give me ideas about helping my children with homework | 96.2% |
| I should be responsible for getting more involved in my children's school | 95.7% |

The statements receiving agreement from the smallest percentage of parents were:

| | |
|---|---|
| I have little to do with my children's success in school | 10.6% |
| Teachers have enough to do without also having to work with parents | 27.8% |
| Working parents do not have time to be involved in school activities | 29.4% |
| I do not have enough training to help make school decisions | 34.1% |
| I have a hard time teaching some skills to my children like reading, math, and writing | 49.3% |

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## Interest in School Decisions

In Part II of the survey, parents were asked to respond to 14 decisions, using a 5-point rating scale (1=definitely not interested to 5=definitely interested). Fifty percent (50%) or more of the parents expressed interest in 13 of the 14 decisions. The percentage of parents interested in each decision is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Choosing classroom discipline methods | 83.2% |
| Evaluating how well my children are learning | 82.1% |
| Setting school behavior rules | 81.4% |
| Amount of homework assigned | 80.1% |
| Setting school rules for grading and passing children | 74.1% |
| Evaluating how well principals and teachers do their job | 72.3% |
| Placing my children in Special Education | 70.7% |
| Deciding what's most important for the school budget | 65.4% |
| Making school desegregation plans | 61.7% |
| Helping the school decide what to teach and how | 57.0% |
| Having more multicultural/bilingual education in the school | 56.7% |
| Hiring principal and teachers | 50.0% |
| Firing principal and teachers | 43.8% |

## Interest in Parent Involvement Roles

In Part III, seven parent involvement roles were listed and parents were asked how much interest they had in being involved in each role using a scale from 1=definitely not interested to 5=definitely interested. Parents expressed the most interest in three very traditional parent involvement roles: audience, 95.9% interested; home tutor, 91.2% interested; and school program supporter, 90.1%. Parents also expressed considerable interest in four other roles: co-learner, 80.0%; advocate, 77.8%; decision-maker, 74.6%; and paid school staff, 59.8%

## Parent Participation in Parent Involvement Activities

In Part IV, the survey asked parents how often they participated in 24 parent involvement activities, using a scale of 1=never to 4=often. The five activities participated in by the largest percentage of parents were:

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| | |
|---|---|
| Going to "open house" or special programs at school | 95.8% |
| Helping children with homework | 92.0% |
| Visiting the school to see what is happening | 91.4% |
| Going to parent/teacher conferences about your child's progress | 91.4% |
| Helping children learn with materials at home | 85.3% |

The least amount of parents reported participating in the following activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Helping to hire or fire teachers and principals | 11.0% |
| Working as part time paid staff | 19.6% |
| Helping to decide how well teachers and principals do their jobs | 20.1% |
| Helping to plan what will be taught in school | 21.4% |
| Planning the school budget | 27.4% |

Suggestions for Improving Parent Involvement

In Part V, parents were asked which of 10 suggestions would work to get parents more involved in the schools. Parents were asked to rate each suggestion, using a 5-point scale of 1 = definitely not work to 5 = definitely would work. All of the suggestions received responses that they would work from more than 82% of the parents. The suggestions parents indicated would work best were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Giving parents more information about children's success in school | 92.9% |
| Making parents feel more welcome in the school | 92.1% |
| Helping parents to better understand the subjects being taught | 90.2% |
| Sending more information to parents about ways they could be involved | 89.1% |
| Having more activities that include children, parents, and teachers | 89.0% |

Reasons for Less Parent Involvement in High School

In Part VI, parents were asked how much they agreed with each of 10 reasons why parents become less involved at high school, using a 4-point scale of 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. The top three reasons parents agreed with were:

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| | |
|---|---|
| Parents may not understand some of the courses taken in high school | 81.4% |
| Teachers don't ask parents to be involved in school as much | 76.1% |
| There are not as many parent/teacher conferences | 70.2% |

Comparisons between Interest and Participation

In order to understand more about parents' interest and participation in parent involvement roles and activities, a comparison was made between parents' interest in each of the seven parent involvement roles and their participation in related parent involvement activities. Exhibit 4 shows the discrepancies between interest in parent involvement roles and participation in parent involvement activities. The largest discrepancy is between parents' interest in the role of decision-maker and parents' participation in parent involvement activities related to the decision-maker role. The related decision-making activities are planning the school budget, helping plan what will be taught in the school, helping decide how well school programs work, helping decide how well teachers and principals do their jobs, and helping to hire/fire teachers and principals.

**Exhibit 4**
**Comparison between Parents' Interest in Roles and Participation in Related Activities**

| Roles N=3103 | Percent Interest in Role | Participation in Activity | Discrepancy |
|---|---|---|---|
| Paid School Staff | 58.5% | 25.7% | 32.8% |
| School Program Supporter | 90.1% | 62.2% | 27.9% |
| Home Tutor | 91.2% | 86.3% | 4.9% |
| Audience | 95.9% | 92.9% | 3.0% |
| Advocate | 77.8% | 40.5% | 37.3% |
| Co-Learner | 80.0% | 57.4% | 22.6% |
| Decision-Maker | 74.6% | 21.7% | 52.9% |

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Secondary Analyses of the Data

Secondary analyses of the expanded survey were also conducted. Frequencies, adjusted frequencies, rank orders, and means were obtained by breaking down the survey into groups according to the following demographic characteristics: gender, ethnicity, educational level, marital status, family work status, city size, age, number of children, income, and year of survey.

To interpret these comparisons, a significance level of $p \leq .001$ was used to identify significant differences, and the eta square statistic was used as an estimate of the amount of variance that could be accounted for by the difference. The largest amount of variance on survey items was explained by the demographic characteristics of income, ethnicity, educational level, and city size.

Although it is inappropriate to generalize, it appears that parents in this survey differ in their responses to certain items on the survey according to several demographic variables. More in-depth studies are needed to confirm these preliminary indications. The survey has, however, made clear the need for more intensive study of the relationship of demographic variables to parent involvement.

Comparing the Expanded Parent Survey with Previous Surveys of Key Stakeholders

Although the Parent Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ) was worded differently for each stakeholder group (parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, school board presidents, state education agency officials, and teacher educators) surveyed, it was used as a guide for comparisons across the groups. The following comparisons were made: (1) parents' agreement compared to educators' agreement with statements about parent involvement; (2) parents' interest in compared to educators' perceived usefulness of parent involvement in school decisions; (3) parents' interest in compared to educators' perceived importance of parent involvement roles; (4) parents' report of participation in parent involvement activities compared with educators' report of typical school parent involvement activities; and (5) parents' interest in school decisions compared to existing school policies that encourage parent involvement in school decisions.

Strong levels of agreement across all of the respondent groups is evident for these statements about parent involvement: Teachers should give me ideas about helping my children with homework; I should make sure that my children do their homework; and I cooperate with my children's teachers. Low levels of agreement across all of the respondent groups is evident for two statements: Teachers have enough to do without also having to work with parents; and I have little to do with my children's success in the school.

Disagreement among the respondents occurred on six statements. These statements are:

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| | Parents | Educators |
|---|---|---|
| o School districts should make rules for involving parents | 20.5% | 90.8% |
| o I should help evaluate my children's teachers and principals | 71.8% | 22.1% |
| o I usually feel at ease when I visit the school | 91.3% | 41.4% |
| o I should have the final word in decisions about my children's education | 70.3% | 28.9% |
| o I do not have enough training to help make school decisions | 34.1% | 69.9% |
| o I should be responsible for getting more involved in my children's school | 95.7% | 64.6% |

For the statements about who should be in charge of parent involvement, there was no clear consensus. When responses from the subgroups of educators were examined, the results showed that each sub-group thought another sub-group should be in charge. Educators strongly favored the school district providing guidelines for parent involvement, but parents strongly disagreed with this statement.

Concerning teacher training, more than 80% of all respondents were in strong agreement with the need for teachers to be trained for parent involvement. These results give stronger support for the earlier findings from the other stakeholder groups of the need for teacher training about how to involve parents in the education of their children at home and at school.

Parents' interest in school decisions was compared to educators' perceived usefulness of parent involvement in school decisions. For two decisions, parent involvement in the amount of homework assigned and placing children in special education, there was response similarity in the level of interest expressed by parents and the perceived usefulness for parent involvement in such decisions by educators. With regard to the decisions, a great deal of response dissimilarity was evident when comparing the level of interest expressed by parents with the perceived level of usefulness expressed by educators for parent involvement.

For example, response differences between parents' interest and educators' perceived usefulness were evident in decisions about selecting school textbooks and other learning materials; hiring principals and teachers; evaluating how well principals and teachers do their job; firing principals and teachers; setting school rules for grading and passing children; and helping decide what to teach and when. In all of these decisions, parents expressed far more interest in participating in them than educators felt such participation would be useful.

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When parents' interest in parent involvement roles was compared to educators' perceived importance of parent involvement in these roles, there was a match between parents' strong interest in the three traditional roles (school program supporter, home tutor, and audience) and educator's strong perceptions of the importance for parent involvement in those roles. There was disagreement about the role of decision-maker with 74.6% of the parents expressing interest and only 44.8% of the teachers and 50.1% of the principals thinking the role was important.

When parents' report of participation in parent involvement activities was compared with educators' report of how typical the activities were in their schools, two activities were consistently rated with both a high level of participation by parents and as a highly typical activity by educators. These two activities were: going to open house or special programs at school and going to parent/teacher conferences about children's progress.

Three activities were consistently rated low in terms of level of participation by parents and not being a typical involvement activity by educators. These activities were: helping to plan what will be taught in school; helping to decide how well teachers and principals do their job; and helping to hire or fire teachers and principals.

For several activities, there was a lack of concurrence between which activities parents reported participating in and educators reported as typical activities in their schools. Regarding two activities, going to classes at the school that help parents teach their children, and helping children learn with materials at home, parents reported more participation than educators thought was typical at their schools.

In other instances, there were differences among educators about what were typical parent involvement activities in schools. These included the following: helping children with homework; visiting the school to see what is happening; helping with school activities such as coffees, pot-luck suppers, fund-raising, etc.; working to improve the schools through community groups like neighborhood associations, church organizations, LULAC, NAACP, etc; helping decide how well school programs work (like Title I, Follow Through, ESAA, etc.); and giving ideas to the school board or school administration for making changes.

Parents' interest in school decisions was also compared to school/district policies that encourage parent involvement in school decisions. Overall, there are few formal, written policies related to parent involvement in school decisions. Only in the cases of informing parents of discipline violations and placing children in special education do more than 70% of the superintendents report the existence of formal policies. The next highest percentage of reports about the existence of formal policies according to respondents occurs in the area of multicultural/bilingual education in the school where approximately 40% reported having written policies of this kind.

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Informal policies for evaluating how well children are learning, for sending information home, and for the retention of children reportedly exist, according to more than fifty percent (50%) of respondents. No policies were reported by more than fifty percent (50%) of the respondents for parent involvement in: selecting school textbooks and other learning materials; deciding what is most important for the school budget; helping the school decide what to teach and how; and participating in school administrative decisions.

These findings led project staff to make a set of recommendations for each stakeholder group surveyed regarding the enhancement of parent involvement in schools and education. These recommendations can be used by educators and parents as they collaborate to plan, develop, implement, sustain, assess and expand parent involvement activities or programs. The section that follows provides a concise listing and discussion of the recommendations.

## MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

SEDL has made a concerted effort to translate the research findings from the review and analyses of the expanded data base to practice-based recommendations for the key stakeholders in parent involvement. Although the recommendations are similar for each group because of the underlying general assumptions, SEDL felt that the recommendations would be more useful if targeted to specific stakeholders.

The assumptions underlying all of the recommendations are:

1. Parents are important participants in the education of children and youth. Parent involvement in a child's education is a major factor for improving school effectiveness, the quality of education, and a child's academic success. Family participation relates to the eventual success of learners because it helps reinforce school learning, allows learners to relate home/community experiences to school activities, and enables education to tap a rich potential of resources and experience bases for its learning program. Parents should be partners in the educational process.

2. The attitudes of teachers and educators are critical to the development of effective parent involvement programs and activities. It is not enough to have knowledge and skills about parent involvement; understanding is also important. Teacher training about parent involvement for both preservice and inservice educators is essential.

3. Parent involvement is a developmental process that must evolve over time. The traditional activities of audience or school program supporter are at the beginning of the continuum and shared decision-making is at the other end of the continuum. Effective parent involvement must include a range of opportunities on this continuum.

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4. Certain sub-groups of parents seem to feel more strongly about specific aspects of parent involvement, and thus it is critical that educators ask parents how they want to be involved in their children's education. Educators need to expand the comprehensiveness and diversity of parent involvement programs.

5. In each building, school, and district educators, parents, and community members need to meet to clearly define parent involvement and to develop consensual, written parent involvement policies.

6. School districts need to provide staff and financial resources for parent involvement program implementation.

## Recommendations for Administrators for Enhancing Parent Involvement in Education

A review and analysis of results from the surveys has led SEDL to offer the following recommendations for administrators as a means of enhancing fuller parent participation in the education of their children at home and at school:

- Administrators need to look beyond traditional ways of working with parents. Superintendents and school board presidents need to be aware that parents are interested in both the traditional and the shared decisionmaking forms of parent involvement.

- Administrators need to collaborate with parents to develop a clear statement about the goals of parent involvement in their school. The statement needs to be based on the premise that parents are equally as important to children's academic success as educators.

- School district policies encouraging parent involvement need to be put in writing and formalized. Responses from the superintendents' and school board presidents' surveys indicate that the existence of formal, written policies encouraging parent involvement is related to increased parent activities at a variety of levels in schools.

- In addition to providing induction, preservice, and inservice training for teachers, school administrators also should participate in parent involvement training activities. If administrators are not aware of the benefits of parent involvement and/or are not skilled in working with parents, they may set norms that discourage teachers from using the involvement skills and knowledge they have acquired. SEDL (1985) has developed a set of guidelines and strategies that may be useful in training teachers and administrators to develop partnerships with parents.

- Administrators need to ask parents how they want to be involved with their children's education. Survey results indicate that

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parents have a range of interests and may be more sophisticated than educators perceive them to be.

- Based on the interests of parents, administrators need to make certain that a variety of opportunities are available for parent involvement in the schools. Administrators should be sensitive to parents' skill levels, estimates of available time, work schedules, and individual preferences as they plan with parents to develop the most appropriate parent involvement activities.

- Administrators will need to help ensure that parents are more fully involved at all levels of the educational system. To facilitate this, administrators should make certain that parents are provided more information, more opportunities to share insights or concerns, and more training for partnership roles with school staff in the education of children.

- In establishing the framework for school district parent involvement programs, administrators will need to view the various types of parent involvement as a developmental sequence from both schools/districts' and parents' point of view. Therefore, administrators should be sensitive to the fact that increasing parent involvement in the role of audience requires comparatively less effort and skill on the part of both educators and parents than increasing the involvement of parents regarding such roles as home tutors, decisionmakers, advocates, or co-learners.

- Administrators need to make available the appropriate kinds of resources for parent involvement efforts. In particular, there should be staff, space, and monetary resources identified and allocated for the implementation of effective parent involvement efforts. The provision of these resources will help emphasize the importance of parent involvement in education and demonstrate a commitment to its success.

## Recommendations for Teacher Educators about Training Teachers for Parent Involvement

A review and analysis of results from the surveys has led SEDL to offer the following recommendations for teacher educators as a means of enhancing fuller parent participation in the education of their children at home and at school:

- Parent involvement at both the preservice and inservice elementary teacher training level should be a developmental sequence that progresses from learning about the more traditional types of parent involvement where parents are asked to cooperate with school staff, to the types of parent involvement in which school staff provide assistance to parents, and then toward the types where parents and school staff work together essentially as partners in education.

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- Preservice elementary teacher education as well as inservice teacher staff development must, as a priority, focus on providing participants with an overview of, or background about, the parent involvement movement as well as providing them with knowledge, understanding, and skills regarding major aspects of parent involvement in education (e.g. the personal, practical, and conceptual frameworks as developed by SEDL (1985)).

- Teacher educators must provide parent involvement training experiences, for elementary preservice and inservice/teachers that stress parent involvement as an integral part of their preparation, rather than an attachment to it. As such, teachers will need to learn how to enhance teaching and learning success; how to develop better, more of a partnership with parents; how to help develop broader community support for the schools; and how to make cooperation between home and school more synergistic.

- The parent-involvement teacher training sequence needs to include specific knowledge bases related to the various kinds and levels of parent involvement. For example: teachers should be taught the differences between teaching children in the classroom and teaching or working with their adult parents to help them become more involved as home tutors.

- After preservice and inservice teachers examine and identify their attitudes toward parent involvement, broaden their perspectives concerning the value/impact of parent involvement, and acquire the relevant knowledge and understandings regarding the main kinds of parent involvement, they should be provided practical opportunities or experiences to develop and sharpen skills in working with parents.

- Inservice parent-involvement teacher training--in order to more effectively enhance teachers' knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and motivations for working more collegially with parents--will need to consist of a series of sequenced workshops rather than a one-day, one-time workshop effort.

- Teacher educators must include principals and other administrators in parent involvement training, as they often set the rules and norms in the schools. If they are not aware of the benefits of parent involvement, or not skilled in working with parents, they may set norms for teachers that discourage them from using the skills or knowledge acquired regarding parent involvement.

- To help school districts develop better relations with parents and work with them as partners in education, teacher educators should emphasize with leaders the importance of spelling out the commitment to parent involvement through formal, written policies. Responses from our superintendents' and school board presidents' surveys indicate that existence of formal written policies encouraging parent involvement is directly related to

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increased levels of a variety of parent involvement activities in schools.

- Teacher educators should help teachers view various types of parent involvement as a developmental sequence, from the teachers' and the parents' point of view. Increasing parent involvement in the role of audience requires comparatively less effort and skill on the part of both teachers and parents than would parent involvement as home tutors. Therefore, interests, skill levels, and estimates of available time, especially on the part of parents, must be considered when deciding which types of parent involvement are to be the focus of program efforts.

- Teacher educators need to advocate that school district, building, and/or classroom parent-involvement efforts establish program activities based on the premise that parents are as equally important to children's academic success as educators. This will necessitate working with parents to help increase their participation at all levels of the educational process.

- Teacher educators need to stress that parents need more involvement in education so that they can (a) strengthen the capacity of their families to establish appropriate learning environments, (b) provide meaningful home learning experiences, and (c) support/reinforce school learning activities.

- Teacher training should include an emphasis on providing parents with more educational information, more opportunities to share their insights/concerns, and more training, as needed, for the roles with which they can, or wish to be involved in education. This can serve as a means of strengthening parents' ability and partnership status in the education of their children.

## Recommendations for Parents for Enhancing Parent Involvement in Education

The results from SEDL surveys suggest that parents can do several things to become more involved in their children's education. These included the following:

1. Ask teachers for ideas about things to help children learn at home and/or do homework.

2. Ask principal to provide involvement training for parents who want it.

3. Tell your children how important it is that teachers and you help with their education.
4. Ask teachers to tell children how important parents are in their education.

5. Tell principals and teachers what your skills and interests are regarding parent involvement.

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6. Tell principals and teachers how much time you have available to be involved.

7. Tell principals and teachers how much interest you have in making school decisions and which ones you would like to help make.

8. Ask principals and teachers to discuss with you their feelings and ideas about parent involvement.

9. Try to be involved in different school activities and not the same ones always.

10. Choose the parent involvement role or roles that are best for you.

11. Tell principals and teachers that you want to be a partner with them in improving schools and education for your community as well as the city.

12. Discuss ideas with other parents and citizens in the community about getting more of them involved to improve schools and education.

## Recommendations for Teachers for Enhancing Parent Involvement in Education

A review and analysis of results from the surveys has led SEDL to offer the following recommendations for teachers as a means of enhancing full parent participation in the education of their children at home and at school:

- Teachers need to look beyond traditional ways of working with parents. More awareness is needed on the part of teachers regarding parents' interest in sharing both the traditional and decision-making forms of parent involvement.

- In helping to establish the framework for parent involvement programs, teachers will need to view the various types of parent involvement as a developmental sequence from both teachers' and parents' point of view. Therefore, teachers should know and understand that increasing parent involvement in certain involvement roles will require comparatively less effort and skill on the part of both teachers and parents than increasing the involvement of parents regarding those roles with which they have had little or no opportunities for participation.
- Teachers need to work collaboratively with parents and principals to develop a clear statement about the goals of parent involvement in their school. The statement needs to indicate that parents are equally as important to children's academic success as educators.

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- Teachers also need to find out how they want to be involved with their children's education both at home and at school. Survey results indicate that parents have a wide range of interests and may be able to be more involved than educators think they can.

- Based on the interests of parents, teachers need to help make certain that a variety of opportunities are available for parent involvement in classrooms and schools. Teachers should know what the skill levels, time availability, work schedules, and individual involvement preferences or interests of parents are as they plan, with parents, to develop effective parent involvement activities or programs.

- Teachers can help ensure that parents are more fully involved at all levels of the educational system by providing them more information, giving them opportunities to share concerns/insights, and advocating more parent training for partnership roles with school staff in the education of children.

- Teachers can enhance parent involvement by participating in preservice and inservice parent involvement preparation activities that help develop better partnerships with parents.

- Teachers can help provide induction orientation in the area of parent involvement for new teachers. By modeling appropriate and effective ways of working with parents, teachers can help in developing and implementing effective parent involvement efforts.

- Teachers can advocate the need for formal, written school policies encouraging parent involvement. These policies can help teachers to explain the school's approach to parent involvement and to develop, then implement parent involvement within the framework of the school and district.

- Teachers need to provide parents with ideas about things to help children learn at home and/or do homework. Teachers should also give parents suggestions about extending school learning activities in the home.

- Teachers should help children understand how important it is for both parents and teachers to be involved with their education. This will help children see parents and teachers as partners in their schooling.

- Teachers should work with principals and parents to better understand and then help overcome the barriers to open communications between parents and teachers or other school staff.

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## Recommendations for Principals for Enhancing Parent Involvement in Education

A review and analysis of results from the surveys has led SEDL to offer the following recommendations for principals as a means of enhancing fuller parent participation in the education of their children at home and at school:

- Principals must envision ways of working with parents that go beyond those of the traditional order. In doing so, principals must be aware that parents are interested in all forms and all levels of parent involvement regarding schools.

- In establishing an atmosphere for broader parent involvement programs, principals must envision parent involvement as a developmental process on the part of teachers and parents. Therefore, principals should know and understand some parents will start with the more traditional kinds of parent involvement and grow or move into increasingly more sophisticated participation. Their skills and interest increase as they experience success and satisfaction from this level of involvement. Other parents can begin with higher order types of involvement and increase this to broader participation at the school, district or state level.

- Principals need to collaborate with parents and teachers in developing a clear statement about the goals of parent involvement in their school. The statement should clearly indicate that parents are equally as important to children's academic or school success as educators.

- Principals should advocate for and help develop formal, written school district policies encouraging parent involvement. School superintendents, central office staff, school board and state education agencies need such input to help ensure that such policies will facilitate increased parent involvement.

- In addition to providing parent involvement and inservice training opportunities for teachers, principals also should participate in such activities. Principals need to be aware of the benefits of parent involvement and be skilled in working with parents so they do not set norms or create environments that prevent teachers from involving parents and discourage parents from becoming more involved.

- Principals should ask parents how they want to be involved in their children's education. Survey results indicate that parents have a wider range of interests than principals deem useful or perceive them to have. Principals need to capitalize on these "unknown" parent interests as a way of improving their involvement in schools.

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- Based on parents' interests, principals need to make a variety of home and school parent involvement opportunities available. This requires principals to be sensitive to the skill levels, time of availability, work schedules, and individual interests/preferences as they plan and develop with parents more meaningful parent involvement activities.

- Principals will need to help ensure that parents are more fully involved at all levels of the educational system. To facilitate this, principals should make certain that parents are provided more information, more opportunities to share insights or concerns, and more training for partnership roles with school staff in the education of children.

- Principals need to make available the appropriate kinds of resources for parent involvement efforts. In particular, there should be staff, space, and monetary resources identified and allocated for the implementation of effective parent involvement efforts. The provision of these resources will help emphasize the importance of parent involvement in education and demonstrate a commitment to its success.

- Principals can encourage teachers to provide parents with ideas for helping children learn at home and/or do homework. Principals can help ensure that teachers give parents suggestions for home learning activities.

- Principals need to stress with children how important it is for both their parents and teachers to help with education. Principals need to make it clear that they want and encourage parents to visit the school and become part of children's schooling.

- Principals should work closely with school staff and parents to reduce the barriers to more open communications and expand the opportunities for more partnership activities that benefit children's learning.

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